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HANDBOOK
OF
SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

JULIAN H. STEWARD, *Editor*

Volume 4

THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN TRIBES

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[title page]

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THE GOAJIRO

By John M. Armstrong and Alfred Métraux

THE REGION

The Goajira Peninsula, projecting as part of Colombia northward into the Caribbean Sea, contains an area of about 5,000 square miles, bordered on the east by the Gulf of Venezuela. The broad level plain known as Lower Goajira occupies the base of the peninsula, while the northern extremity is known as Upper Goajira and is characterized by three distinct ranges of hills. These hills have a maximum height of 2,600 feet (about 780 m.) and are separated from each other by two broad plains which run from sea to sea. The country is dry and infertile, the vegetation consisting of divi-divi, cactus, prickly-pear, and other xerophilic plants. Even these are absent where bare rock and stone slides preclude vegetation. Rivers are almost nonexistent, the country being cut in all directions by shallow, dry, sandy water courses which drain off rain as it falls. In the south and west, on the treeless prairies or savannas, the land is more hospitable. Here the Indians do most of their stock raising.

LOCATION AND HISTORY

The pastoral *Goajiro* who inhabit this peninsula (map 6) differ profoundly from the agricultural forest-dwelling *Motilones* and *Arhuaco* to the south. Juan de Castellanos, in his "Elegías de los Varones Ilustres" (1874), is the first to allude to these Indians, though he calls them *Cocinas*. He states that in his time, about 1550, cattle were already abundant in the area. It seems that the adoption of pastoral life by the *Goajiro* took place soon after the Spanish settlement of that part of the continent. The name *Goajiro* was, however, already known in the 16th century and was applied first by Pedro Simón (1882-92). The first reliable ethnographic information about the *Goajiro* goes back to José Nicolás de la Rosa (Nicholás, 1901) and Antonio Julián, who both visited these Indians in the 18th century. Jahn (1927, pp. 119-136) has gathered the few data concerning the *Goajiro* which he found in the early literature. A short summary of the first description of these Indians is given by Hernández de Alba (1936, pp. 8-12).

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175 During the Colonial Period, the *Goajiro* were hostile toward the Span-
648 iards. After 1830, however, as a result of better treatment from the Whites, thanks in part to the efforts of Juan MacPherson, they became more friendly. Present authorities in the *Goajiro* region merely regulate frontier traffic.

777 The attempts by the Capuchin Fathers to alter their ways of life have
177 been unsuccessful. Except for the thin Catholic veneer, noticeable in baptismal rites and Spanish names, *Goajiro* social life seems to have been little affected by centuries of contact with Hispanic culture. Foreign influence is more apparent materially in iron implements, utensils, guns, textiles, and ornaments. All the domestic animals are of Spanish origin.

165 As a result of tuberculosis, smallpox, and venereal disease, the *Goajiro*
164 are gradually dying out, and the population estimates found in the literature have become smaller and smaller, the most recent indicating a scant 10,000.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

162 The *Goajiro* are usually described as aggressive and untrustworthy, of
[163] medium or small stature (cf. J. A. Mason, 1926, pp. 39, 52), copper colored, with jet-black hair, dark eyes rather obliquely set, a broad and blunt nose, and a large mouth (pl. 72, *bottom, right*). Within the tribes there are physical differences which seem to correspond with social status,
[165] the lower classes being smaller and more Indian in appearance, while those of higher rank are more often of a greater stature, with earlier hair and larger noses.

LANGUAGE

167 The *Goajiro* language belongs to the *Arawakan* family. There is, however, no good analysis of it. A grammar, "replete with errors" according to Simons, was published by Rafael Calcedo in 1878. Various word lists have been published from time to time.

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

209 **Farming.**—The *Goajiro* have a poor opinion of agriculture, and only
[210] the poorer ones practice it. The one fertile part of the peninsula is near Punta Espada. Here the land is well cultivated, and plantains, sugarcane, calabaza, corn, sugarcane, and grain are grown. Tobacco, bananas, melons, gourds, manioc, sweetpotatoes, millet, beans, and watermelons also are raised. Those who own cattle grow only small patches of quick-maturing corn for the purpose of making chicha beer.

22 **Hunting, fishing, and gathering.**—Hunting, fishing, and gathering occupy a minor place. Deer, armadillos, land tortoises, and rabbits are

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the chief game. The *Goajiro* who live near the coast sometimes catch fish (with hook and line), lobsters, mollusks, and crabs.

Cattle raising.—The *Goajiro* are primarily nomadic cattle raisers and, consequently, depend upon the water supply. In the rainy season they seek natural depressions, which they sometimes enlarge artificially, where the water may gather. In case of drought they wander toward the sea, where wells 30 to 40 feet (9 to 12 m.) deep are dug.

Besides cattle the *Goajiro* keep sheep, goats, horses (pl. 72, *bottom, left*), mules, pigs, and domestic fowls, which they take with them wherever they go. An estimate gives them 100,000 cattle, 200,000 sheep and goats, 30,000 horses and mules, and 30,000 donkeys. As cattle are a measure of wealth, the Indians are reluctant to kill them for food, but they utilize the milk or export the animals to Curaçao and Aruba in exchange for textiles and corn. Each tribe has its own cattle brand, and the annual round-up and branding is an occasion for great festivities. Horse races and other sports take place, and large quantities of food and drink are consumed.

Food preparation.—*Goajiro* diet consists almost entirely of meat and milk products. Goats and sheep are killed every day or two for meat, and the milk of the cows is made into butter and cheese. This diet is supplemented by yuca, cactus fruit, sugar, rice, and plantains, the last three obtained from Colombian and Venezuelan traders in exchange for skins. Meat that is not immediately consumed is suspended from tall poles, and skins are pegged to the ground and salted in preparation for sale. Butter is made by stirring the cream with a fluted stick in a calabash or wooden bucket. To make cheese, rennet is added to skimmed milk in a trough, and the curds are put in a primitive wooden cheese press, which is weighted with a heavy rock.

HOUSES AND VILLAGES

Although the *Goajiro* are of a common origin, they are divided into clans ("castas" or "tribes"), each living within a rather limited area (Simons, 1885, p. 796). The clans are split into local groups, which occupy extended villages or rancherías, each with 2 to 50 houses (ranchos) and 10 to 250 or more Indians. Houses are always within gunshot distance of one another and so disposed that surprise attacks would be difficult. If a village is at all permanent, a protective cactus hedge surrounds it.

Goajiro nomadism makes elaborate houses unnecessary. Dwellings are mere lean-tos, arbors, and temporary gabled roofs supported on poles. Thatch is made from the core of the cactus, split lengthwise. Rough tables, chairs with rawhide seats, and benches are often used. The hammock is always present. House walls are often lacking, but a corner of the hut may be closed off for a girl's puberty seclusion. When mi-

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When mi-
grating from one locality to another the *Goajiro* generally dismantle their houses and take them along, piling the poles and thatch on the backs of burros. Sometimes, however, they leave them for their own or someone else's use in the future.

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

Goajiro dress has changed little since the time of Nicolás de la Rosa (18th century). Men normally wear only a breechcloth, a necklace, and a head band with feather attached (pl. 72, *top*); but when traveling, paying visits, or receiving company they wear a large loincloth with many folds, a mantle (nowadays of bright colors), and an immense sash, in which they carry their arrows. A knitted string bag is hung from the waistband. In towns trousers and shirts are worn. The women wear a cotton dress, sometimes made like a simple sack with holes cut for the head and arms. The puna—long strings of beads passing over both shoulders, crossing each other on the breast and back and held in place by a sash or belt of beads (the sirapo)—is placed on a female child a few months after birth and gradually augmented according to the parents' wealth and the child's age. Black beads are generally used for the sirapo, colored ones for the puna. A married woman wears the puna until her first confinement. After her seclusion at puberty, a robe, sometimes containing 8 or 10 yards of embroidered material, is also worn by a *Goajiro* woman, but the loosely folded cloth which was her sole covering before puberty is still worn beneath it. Women, unlike men, are modest and avoid being seen naked.

Some young girls have as many as 100 turns of beads around their waists, as well as many around their wrists and ankles. Red coral is preferred, but most beads are made from seeds or coconut shell and are cut out by means of a hollow metal reamer twirled rapidly between the palms. The perforated shell may then be used as a colander. Glass and porcelain beads and earrings are also worn. The most prized ornaments are the *tumas*—polished and perforated stone ornaments found in some of the old graves. On dress occasions necklaces of beads and gold ornaments are worn. These, found in *Tairona* graves, are fashioned in the form of tiny animals, frogs, turtles, etc.

The men, except the medicine men, wear their hair short, kept back by a ring or crown made of plaited straw, or of wool with a tassel behind. Often the two are combined and adorned with a couple of feathers in front; or the whole may be made of feathers. For protection against mosquitos and sun both sexes paint their skin with powders made from rotten wood, a black stain made from a wild nut, and another color extracted from leaves and mixed with fat. After puberty women cut their hair short, keeping the shorn tresses in a bag hung from the roof; henceforth they never let it grow beyond the neck. They make designs on

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They make designs on
their skin with black stain and tattoo themselves, especially on the arms and legs, with charcoal dust pigment. At least one of the marks is the same as the tribal brand.

MANUFACTURES

Women have a rather definite daily routine. They arise before daybreak, milk the cows, and prepare the morning meal for the men, who then go off to fish, hunt, fight, or merely loaf and drink chicha. They fill their jugs at the water hole and then spend the rest of the day collecting wild cotton, spinning, weaving, making ropes, grinding corn, making butter, cheese, and chicha, and performing other household duties. They milk again in the evening.

Textiles are probably the best *Goajiro* manufactures. Their other products are pottery (which is the virtual monopoly of a few sibs), bows and arrows, and saddles and harnesses.

Spinning and weaving.—Wild cotton is collected, the seeds removed by hand, and small wads are rolled around a thin stick to form small tubes about half an inch (12.5 mm.) in diameter and 6 inches (15 cm.) long. These tubes are then spun into thread with the use of a spindle, one end of which rests in a calabash bowl on the ground. Yarns are colored with vegetable dyes, especially divi-divi.

Almost every household owns a loom, before which the women sit for hours weaving hammocks and bright-colored belts for men and horses. The warp is made from one long continuous thread wound around two thick horizontal poles, the upper one firmly attached to two uprights, the lower one hanging loose and maintaining the tension. As the work progresses, the cloth is moved forward around the poles, so that an endless strip of cloth is produced, which is then cut. Shuttles are passed through by hand, the warp being shifted by means of a threading arrangement which takes hold of alternate strands. On a piece of cloth about 2 yards wide an inch of weave every three hours is considered very fast work.

Containers.—Most cooking utensils are made of crude earthenware by a few tribes in the vicinity of the Teta, a peak near the middle of the peninsula. Spoons and forks are cut out of calabashes. Some Indians possess enameled mugs and pots obtained from itinerant traders.

Weapons.—Almost every man possesses a good rifle. Cartridges are scarce and expensive and must be smuggled in. Firearms are consequently reserved mainly for warfare, and the bow and arrow is the everyday weapon.

The bow is made from the hard, springy wood of the black palm. It is almost round in cross section, 5 to 6 feet (1.7 to 2 m.) long, and strung with a special sisal cord. The end which rests on the ground is protected

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411 by an empty cartridge case, to which a metal ring is sometimes attached, giving a musical note with every shot.

Feathered arrows show many designs. Bird arrows may be tipped with cartridge cases or with large, rounded, wooden knobs about 1 inch (2.5 cm.) in diameter. Heads made from nails are used for small game. Serrated metal-tipped arrows are used in warfare; but the most dangerous arrow is pointed with a sting ray tail, sharpened to a fine needlelike point and fitted into the hollow end of a light cane shaft about 4 feet (1.2 m.) long and three-eighth inch (9 mm.) thick.

[278] To prepare arrow poison, scorpions, centipedes, and poisonous spiders are mashed, snake venom is added, and the mixture is allowed to putrefy for several days. The poison will retain its potency for six months. It is kept in a short section of bamboo, which is carried around the waist, together with the arrow points, each in a hollow reed. Before shooting, an Indian dips the point into the poison and inserts it in the shaft.

[282] A decorated leather wrist strap is worn as a bowstring guard.

372 **Fire making.**—Fire is made by twirling an arrow on a cactus hearth; the spark is caught in dry grass.

TRADE

439 There is considerable trade between the *Goajiro* and foreigners. Firearms and ammunition, cloth, beads, blankets, rum, cutlery, corn, crude sugar, rice, plantains, and tobacco are imported in exchange for salt, cattle, cheese, milk, hides, pearls and pearl shells, logwood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*), and divi-divi (*Caesalpinia coriaria*).

464 During the salt season the Indians of the interior flock to Manaure, where they are paid for loading sacks of salt into the warehouse and onto ships. Both men and women take part in the work, the men filling the sacks and the women carrying them.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614 The *Goajiro* are subdivided into 30 odd matrilineal sibs ("castes" or "tribes"), each identified with an animal. Some of the larger and more important sibs are split into smaller groups, each with a special totem. (See Simons, 1885, p. 796, and Weston, 1937, p. 139, for a list of the various sibs, together with the totem animals and the locality which they inhabit.) The members of any sib are more widely spread throughout the peninsula than previously thought, although in some localities, one sib may be found to the exclusion of all others. Each "caste," according to Petrullo (1937, p. 155), "holds sovereignty over a well-defined territory." The sib which is largest and wealthiest in livestock is that of the Urianas. It has many subdivisions, such as Uriana jaguar, Uriana rabbit, Uriana paularate (a song bird), and Uriana gecko (a lizard). The

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Urbanos are connected by marriage with the Pushaina, another wealthy "tribe" of the Goajiro.

Each extended village (section or ranchería) consists of related clan members who are bound by close ties and who unite against outsiders if [illegible] one of them is wronged. Intermarriage among the clans is common.

The role of the maternal uncle in Goajiro culture is of great importance. Santa Cruz's detailed study of it (1941) will be summarized here. Types of behavior, both proscribed and understood, vary, not only according to the seniority of either uncle or nephew but also according to that of the clans. The maternal uncle must leave all his property to his oldest sister's oldest son, the other nephews receiving nothing. In practice the maternal uncle transfers most of his property to his own children, and after his death little if anything remains for the nephew. The attitude of a senior nephew toward his senior maternal uncle largely depends on what inheritance he expects from him. If the nephew marries a girl from a wealthy family and has, therefore, to pay a high bride price, the senior maternal uncle is expected to make a donation to meet the price. The uncle has no authority, however, in the selection of the bride.

Etiquette requires that in company the nephew must always remain silent if his senior maternal uncle is speaking; if the nephew wishes to speak he must first ask his uncle's permission. The nephew must always show respect and conduct himself with propriety. On the other hand, a senior uncle should not criticize or laugh at his senior nephew. No such behavior is proscribed between father and son or between other uncles and nephews. Public opinion castigates any deviation from this behavior between uncle and nephew.

The relationship between a maternal uncle and his niece is just the reverse of this, for the uncle is the recipient of benefits. He receives the bride price paid for the niece, and he contributes nothing toward the dowry for the bridegroom. The maternal uncle, however, is empowered to accept or reject a prospective bridegroom, and the girl has no recourse in the matter. A girl is respectful and considerate, although less rigidly formal, toward her senior maternal uncle. Her behavior toward her other uncles depends solely on her regard for them.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

There is no central government uniting all the sibs, but each sib or subdivision thereof has its chiefs who inherit their position matrilineally. The oldest chief has greatest authority and may carry a knobbed stick as symbol of his authority. He is generally the wealthiest and has most retainers. Hereditary status is very important, and a man born poor may never achieve a high position, even though he acquires much wealth. He may, however, marry a woman of high rank and his children will inherit her rank. Chiefs are polygynous and have many daughters, for

Chiefs are polygynous and have many daughters, for whom very high bride prices are paid—sometimes thousands of animals, worth $6,000 to $10,000. Such rich chiefs take great pride in their daughters, dressing them in fine silken robes and necklaces of gold and pearls and providing them with personal servants.

There is a class of slaves who are beneath the chiefs' retainers in the social hierarchy. It consists of people born into this status and of captives.

PROPERTY

All cattle, though individually owned, belong in theory to the local group as a whole and are worked for the common benefit of all. For example, the cattle paid as a bride price when a girl marries within her own ab go to a new owner, but the milk, butter, cheese, and hides from them continue to be shared by everyone in the ab. When a woman receives cattle as a bride price for her daughter any new stock born to them belongs to the daughter's husband and his sons, and when the animals are rounded up for the annual branding each son is allowed to brand a certain number of them.

ETIQUETTE

The Guajiro are in general unfriendly to strangers but have a well-established code of hospitality. Strangers calling at a house must wait until invited in. Inside a house a bowl of chicha or rum (coffee when available) is the first gift offered the visitor, who is thereafter given a hammock and treated as a member of the family. A special feast may be arranged if there are many guests. A guest of high rank is feasted, and some of the young girls of the house may be placed at his disposal.

LAW AND ORDER

The chiefs have little power outside their own local groups, where they settle minor disputes. The solution of many disputes and transgressions of customs are left to the parties concerned. The laws of group responsibility and group retaliation lead to frequent intertribal feuds. A person without a strong ab to protect him is helpless, for others may use any act which may conceivably be interpreted as harmful as pretext for demanding indemnity. For example, a person injured while intoxicated may demand payment from the person who sold him the rum, or a person injured by a borrowed animal may demand payment from the owner of the animal; a thief who hurts himself when trespassing on the property of his intended victim will demand compensation of him; and anyone aiding a sick or wounded person who subsequently dies incurs a liability.

If a person injures himself he must make an expiatory gift to the members of his own ab and a lesser gift to his father's relatives. If a child dies when under the care of one parent, this parent must reimburse

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the other. Many other cases indicate the absolute nature of *Goajiro* law 672
and the refusal to recognize extenuating circumstances.

Murder is a very serious crime, and the victim's family immediately 682
demands blood money to the amount of 200 or more cattle. For failure 628
to pay, a member of the murderer's sib of the same rank as the victim must forfeit his life. If payment is not forthcoming retaliatory raids are made. As the defenders generally lose more people than the attackers, the feud may continue indefinitely until all the members of one sib will consider themselves at war with the members of the other, thereby spreading the war throughout the peninsula. If a feud should develop between the sib of the husband and that of the wife, the latter, with her children, will return to her own group until the trouble is over.

A person who has received a deadly insult from another is baited and 683
chided until he takes revenge by killing the offender, in proof of which he removes the victim's viscera and takes them home. This act also prevents the victim's soul from bothering him. If unable to accomplish this he may commit suicide. Suicide is also sometimes a means of venge- 762
ance, a person feeling that he will suffer less than those who caused him to commit the act. Thus a wife who is not allowed enough freedom may hang herself.

Next to murder, one of the most serious offenses is to mention a per- 689
son's true name (given at birth?) or to mention a person's name after his death. This has caused many tribal conflicts.

The value of the compensation demanded in disputes varies directly 631
with the social rank of the offended party. In some cases a repeated 565
offender may be killed by his own sib members. Sometimes, rather than 728
to continue the warfare, hostile sibs may confer under the auspices of an outsider, such as a Capuchin monk, and draw up peace terms. In personal quarrels or minor brawls women often step in and enforce peace.

WARFARE

Wars between the *Goajiro* and outsiders are rare, but any White man 721
may be held liable for the offense done by another, as all Whites are thought 609
to belong to the same sib. Sometimes the few civilized people living in the peninsula take vengeance on the Indians, which leads to further reprisals by the latter.

At the time of De la Rosa, war was declared by sending to the other 721
tribe an ambassador who, in a public speech, asked indemnities for damage previously done. If these were not conceded war was declared, but a brief truce was observed in order that preparations might be made. In battle each group of opposing warriors formed a semicircle and tried to surround and destroy the other. In individual encounters a *Goajiro* rode 726
out on a horse, but, upon seeing the enemy, he dismounted and shot his own horse with an arrow to show his confidence and willingness to fight

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726 on equal terms. He then approached the enemy from the left while making quick movements, jumps, and turns, with his legs apart and his knees bent. More recently, according to Ernst (1887 c), war is not declared, attempts being made to take the enemy by surprise.

[747] Wars last indefinitely, sometimes being broken by a peace brought about by an influential "civilizado" or the Capuchin monks, the latter sometimes paying the retribution demanded out of their own pockets.
579 Some tribes, such as the *Cosina* of Serrania Cosina (actually a conglomeration of outcastes rather than a sib), make their living almost entirely by robbery and pillage, destroying houses, stealing cattle, and killing or enslaving their enemies.

LIFE CYCLE

843 **Birth and childhood.**—During pregnancy a woman continues to do her heavy work up to the very hour of delivery. At childbirth, the shaman
844 pronounces various spells over the patient and applies poultices made of
[156] dried flowers, roots, etc. A large, heavy stone placed over the womb and vigorous massaging bring about the birth. If the placenta is not soon expelled, the woman drinks a medicine concocted by the medicine man. As soon as the child is safely delivered the father serves rum and chicha
[884] to all his relatives. If the pains of childbirth appear when the sib is on the march, the woman mounts and rides ahead so that when the sib catches up the event is practically over. The husband cuts the cord with his machete and cauterizes its ends with a glowing ember. The woman
[159] then continues on the march with the child in a sling on her back. When the permanent camp is reached she washes herself and the child.

95 Baptism is a Christian ceremony which the *Goajiro* have adopted, and
551 most of the Indians are called by Spanish names, as their real names may
177 not be mentioned. Teknonymy is practiced; a parent is addressed by its child's name plus a prefix, nushi or sushi for the father, ni or si for the mother. Thus, a father may be called Nushijuan after a son or Sushijuana after a daughter.

857 At 6 or 7, girls learn to grind salt, pick cotton, and tend the smaller
869 animals; the boys imitate their fathers.

855 Parents are said to show little affection for their children, sometimes
[856] selling them at Sinamaica. They receive $10 or $15 for a child of 8 or 9 years. The purchaser becomes the child's guardian, teaches him the Catholic faith, and keeps him until he is 17 years old. These children
[536] rarely return home. Abandoned children are taken to the San Antonio
79 orphanage, where the girls continue to wear their *Goajiro* dress, but the boys are put into jackets and pants.

881 **Girls' puberty.**—At her first menstruation a girl is isolated in a small dark hut and stripped of all her ornaments. She lies in a hammock, sometimes hoisted near the roof. For the first 2 days she drinks no

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water but is given an herbal purgative. Her hair is cut short. Generally 531
several of her relatives stay around the door of the hut, and strangers
and men with an eye to matrimony may look in. During this period the
girl is taught the duties of married life and such skills as weaving,
sewing, and making hammocks. When she emerges, stout and bleached,
a special festival is held, when she resumes her ornaments and puts on
the adult clothes that she has made during her confinement. She is now
considered marriageable. The length of her confinement depends on
her status, though theoretically it lasts until her hair again reaches the 554
nape of her neck. Poor girls are secluded only a few weeks, rich girls 556
up to 2 years.

Sexual life and marriage.—Little is known about the sexual life of 536
the *Goajiro*. A certain amount of promiscuous love making occurs among
the young people at the biweekly festivals. Dances also provide an op-
portunity for sexual advances.

There are some male transvestites who carry on only female activities 538
and are ridiculed by the men.

When a man desires to marry he sends his father or uncle as inter- 574
mediary, then pays a bride price which has been set by the girl's relatives. 583
The payment is usually in cattle, but goats, pearls, liquor, cotton cloth, 602
and gold ornaments also are used. The father retains the purchase price
only when his first daughter marries; the income of subsequent marriages
goes to the girl's senior maternal uncles. The mother also receives part
of the income. A son obtains the cattle for the bride payment from
the increase of his father's herds.

Intermarriage between the sibs is frequent, and many of the *Goajiro* 582
give their daughters to "civilizados" from Maracaibo and Rio Hacha,
who pay higher prices and find such a tie with the Indians useful in their
trading relations.

The marriage ceremony consists of a series of feasts and exchanges of 585
presents between the two families. The wedding night is spent at the 591
rancheria of the bride's mother, but the nuptial hammock (specially
woven by the female relatives of the bride) is hung from a tree some dis-
tance away from the house. For a period of days and even months the
bridegroom leaves his bride at dawn and returns only after sunset. In 604
this way the groom shows respect to his mother-in-law.

Polygyny is general. The number of wives depends on the economic 595
status of the husband, some men having as many as 20. Each wife lives
in her own house, where her husband occasionally visits her. The man,
as head of the polygynous household, supervises the daily slaughter of 592
animals and the distribution of meat and corn to each household accord-
ing to the number of its members.

If a wife shirks her domestic duties she may be divorced and her hus- 586
band may claim the return of the bride price cattle, plus their increase and

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536 minus an amount considered equivalent for the sexual right he had exer-
[536 cised. If a woman dies in her first childbirth the husband may demand
585] the full return of the bride price (Simons, 1885, p. 792, however, states
that the wife's relatives demand compensation from the husband).
536 Adultery entails divorce with full return of the bride price. It rarely
857 occurs, however, as the wife will be treated badly by her own relatives.
At his death a man's wives are inherited by his brother, and next by his
587 sister's sons; the women may avoid this by making a payment equivalent
768 to their bride price. If he is of the Catholic faith his children may claim
184 to be his legal heirs, which leads to conflict with the maternal nephews.
(See Social Organization, p. 374.)

562 The influence of women in political affairs is sometimes noticeable.
692 There are cases of female chiefs, and women are respected enough so
as to be able to intervene and stop brawls.

764 Death.—Funerals are accompanied by festivities which last days or even
[558 weeks, according to the wealth of the family. There are some differences
560] in the funeral ceremonies which are apparently associated with the par-
ticular silsa. These funeral feasts afford the best opportunity for display
of wealth, and more than 1,000 head of livestock may be butchered.
Every mourner who comes to the feast contributes animals for slaughter
and continues to do so as long as he cares to remain. After the mourning
period, marked by weeping and lamenting interspersed with drinking and
feasting, the corpse, which has lain in a hammock slung from the rafters,
[787] is sewn up in hides by the women (men may not touch a dead body)
and carried to the cemetery of the tribe. For a year or so, the body may
be temporarily consigned to a shallow grave marked by a pile of stones.
Food and drink are often placed in the grave, and, if the deceased had been
a warrior, his bows and arrows are put in. A year or two later the bones
764 are exhumed and reburied in a large urn. The exhumation is generally
765 done at night and is accompanied by a feast. The remains are carried in
a funeral procession to the dead person's birthplace, where they are
buried in the family's own cemetery. The funeral urn is placed in a
vertical position with the narrow neck of the jar protruding above ground
to permit the free entry and exit of the spirit and to allow the remains of
other members of the family to be added from time to time. A cactus
hedge surrounds the cemetery, and in wet weather half a calabash is
placed over the opening of each jar to keep out the rain. Whenever two
relatives of a recently deceased person meet, they bow to the ground,
shouting and groaning, for several minutes. (For a slightly different
account of the burial of a rich man, see Simons, 1885, p. 792.)

751 If a person is stricken with smallpox the whole tribe moves away, only
166 the family of the sick person remaining. When the death occurs they
bury the body below the floor and burn the hut over the grave.

8:Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
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PLATE 72.—Guajiro Indians. (Courtesy American Museum of Natural History.)

[facing p. 380]

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The Guajiro believe that after death the deceased in ethereal form 775
wander about the country, their favorite meeting place being in the vicinity
of Bahía Honda in the extreme north of the peninsula. There is some
evidence that the Indians look forward to a happier existence after death.
From this belief in the afterlife stems the practice of mutilating the body
of a slain enemy, for once his body is broken and scattered it is not possible
to reassemble his soul, and the slayer is prevented from a vengeance-seeking
spirit.

The dead are highly respected or feared; consequently, it is a serious 769
offense to mention a dead person by name. 551

GENERIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Games.—The Guajiro have various athletic sports, such as horse racing, 526
wrestling, and archery. Contestants shoot at a skin ball or a fruit tossed
into the air or at targets; they are very accurate up to 125 yards. Tourna-
ments are held in which the contestants pair off, the victor of each round
winning an arrow and continuing to compete.

Feasts and dances.—The Guajiro are fond of feasts and hold them 574
whenever opportunity offers—at funerals, when they have received their 756
pay for leading salt, at baptisms, or when a person completes his training
as a medicine man. Wenton (1937) describes a festival held on the last-
mentioned occasion. For 2 days the big drum was sounded by relays of
players, spreading the news. The dance, practiced beforehand, took place
in a circle some 25 feet (7.5 m.) in diameter around which some 200
Indians gathered. A man, nude except for his waist cloth and head band 542
with ornamental plume, with his face painted red in a crisscross pattern, 535
danced backward from a girl dressed in a voluminous robe and wearing
a large red handkerchief on her head. The girl attempted to overtake
and bowl off the man, who retreated before her in a circle with a peculiar
double step, almost a hop and a skip. As one pair tired another took its
place, the dance continuing indefinitely.

Musical instruments.—Guajiro musical instruments are few. A 534
calabash filled with stones or peas serves as a rattle for dance accom-
paniment. The clarinet is about 2 feet (0.6 m.) long, made of telescoped
(?) sections of reed with a bell consisting of calabash and a vibrating reed
in the mouthpiece. It is side blown. The large drum is carved from a
hollow section of tree, 15 inches (38 cm.) in diameter and 24 inches
(60 cm.) long, and has both ends covered with sharpskin. It is slung
from the rafters, a branch, or from the player's neck. Singing among the
Guajiro is virtually nonexistent.

Narcotics and stimulants.—To make chicha beer, maize may be mas- 273
ticated by the women and spat into a large earthenware bowl, with water
and crude sugar added. After 3 days it is strained and drunk. By another

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273 method the maize is finely pulverized by hammering on a flat stone, instead of being masticated. Beer is drunk in large quantities, as is rum received by trade.

276 Both sexes commonly smoke long narrow cigarettes, which the women make of bundles of 8 or 10 leaves. Formerly, at least in the western portion of the country, the *Goajiro* chewed coca (hayo) with lime, which stained their teeth black. Coca is still grown, but there is no mention of this custom in recent times.

RELIGION

776 *Goajiro* religion is imperfectly known. Mareigua (Maleiwa) seems to have been the Creator and Culture Hero. He caused the first *Goajiro* to emerge from the ground and taught the tribe how to produce fire with a drill. He saved them during the flood by raising the Cerro Pororo where they had taken refuge and by driving the jaguars away. As a Supreme Being he shows some moral preoccupation, in the past having punished those who lived in incest. He sends rain and all the good things which the *Goajiro* expect from nature (Hernández de Alba, 1936, p. 44).

Yoluha (Yorja) has been thought to signify the god of thunder, lightning, and drought, but the term probably does not designate a single deity but bad spirits or ghosts in general. These are feared at night when
776 the sky is clouded; to prevent their inroads the *Goajiro* stretch a thin cord
789 between two poles reaching above the roof. They attach to this cord, at regular intervals, fishhooks which serve to entangle the Yoluha and make their stay unpleasant. Sometimes when sounds coming from the bush are thought to have been made by spirits, the Indians light embers and throw stones at them.

787 The *Goajiro* give considerable importance to dreams. A dream may
438 cause the desertion of a camp, a war, or a consultation with a shaman. The *Goajiro* carry charms which they buy from shamans.

SHAMANISM

756 *Goajiro* shamans (piache) are of both sexes. Aside from their long hair shamans differ little in external appearance from ordinary persons, but their power is reputed to be considerable and people avoid offending them. They are said to cause the heart of a person to stop beating unless they are paid enough.

A shaman keeps his cures secret and divulges them only to a successor, who undergoes a long period of training and who pays his instructor a certain number of cattle. When the training is complete, there is a public initiation with dancing and drinking, at which the novice is seized by fits as demonstration of his new power. The instructor chants spells

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over the novice so he (or she) lies in the hammock twisting and groaning as his spirit takes possession of him, imparting knowledge and power. 756

In attempting to cure, a shaman often causes greater injuries to the patient; permanent blindness may result from his effort to cure eye injuries with caustic powders or to remove foreign substances with horsehairs or cactus spines. Tuberculosis is treated by inducing expectoration and prescribing a meaty diet. Dysentery is cured with herbal medicines. Well-chewed tobacco or tobacco-laden spittle rubbed over a painful area is a common method of therapy. If the medicine man effects a cure, which he frequently does, he is rewarded with gifts of cattle, rum, etc. No attempt is made to treat smallpox, the victim often being abandoned to his fate. 755

Some practitioners who are not exactly shamans divine by burning 757
a bundle at the end of a stick or by examining the bottom of a bottle, 757
i.e., by crystal gazing (Hernández de Alba, 1936, p. 42).

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